

PERSONAL PIETY AS RELATED TO THE MISSIONARY WORK.

A

S E R M O N

BEFORE THE

FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF

NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN.

BY

REV. ASA D. SMITH, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FOURTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
NEW-YORK.

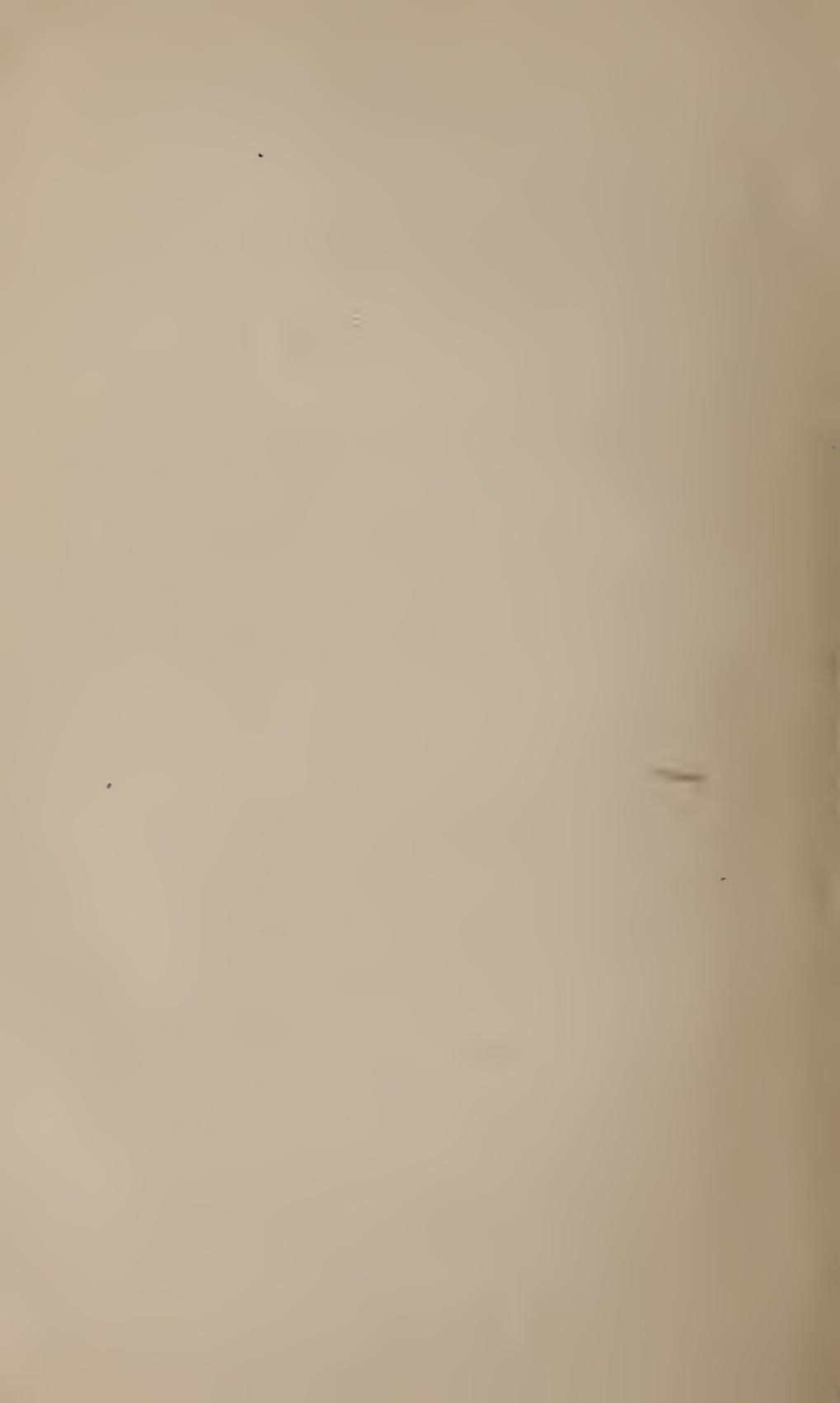
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PSALM li. 13.

“Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.”

UNIQUE as was the origin of the remarkable lyric from which these words are taken, it is not to be regarded as the outburst, merely, of an individual heart. We pass, as we read it, from the particular to the universal. Here, as in other Psalms, we may, as Luther expresses it, “look into the hearts of *all* good men.” Nor are we limited to any single element or aspect of piety. Penitence is, indeed, prominent; but there are linked with it, according to the immutable laws of spiritual affinity, all the other graces. These graces are presented, too, in a most natural order. There is a beautiful climax; the principle of development, the law of growth obtains; there springs up before us, as from the dark germ to the flowery coronal, a perfect organism. Nor is this an incongruous issue of the individual case. The restoration of a lapsed believer is, in its elemental character and its necessary processes, much like a first conversion. Such

was David's recovery ; with perhaps this difference, that, as not infrequently happens, he was, through abounding grace, brought to a loftier position than ever. He breathes forth, first, the most sincere and profound contrition, that invariable beginning of all true godliness. Under the burden of his guilt, he looks not to any righteousness or strength of his own, but to God's pardoning mercy, and to his sanctifying Spirit. There come before us, then, the conscious purity of the soul divinely cleansed, and the joy and gladness of the forgiven one. Out of the abundance of the heart, we have next the lips speaking. "My mouth," says the Psalmist, "shall show forth thy praise." Nor are his thoughts limited to the narrow circle of his own interests ;—into a broader sphere flow forth his quickened affections. He would "teach transgressors ;" he would see sinners converted ; his earnest desire is, that God's cause may prosper. He pours, at length, the fulness of his soul into the words of the text :—"Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

It is with no sufficient reason, that certain critics have regarded this passage as not a part of the original Psalm, but a convenient accretion of later times. We see here, most clearly, David's image and superscription. How natural for the magnanimous man who exclaimed, "These sheep, what have they done ?" to beg of God, in this connection, that from the sins he bewailed no harm might come to others. Nay, with all gracious experience — especially with the profound

experience here unfolded — the outgoings of benevolence are accordant and homogeneous ; they are its necessary consummation. There is in our text no forced or strange transition ; the Psalm, without it, were incomplete. That charity which is not only the fulfilling of the law, but the essential element of every Christian grace, though it does in a sense begin at home, yet abides not there. While its centre is the throne of God, its circuit is the universe. In David's time, it is true, the field of active benevolence was comparatively limited ; the "middle wall of partition" was not yet broken down. Yet we have in the prayer before us, the vital element of all modern evangelism ; we have piety here, going forth from its inner shrine, impelled and animated by the spirit awakened and nourished there, to scatter blessings wherever it may. We have a deep Christian experience developing itself in Christian philanthropy. Were the heart which suggested these words throbbing on earth now, it would be satisfied, we may be sure, with nothing less than the world's conversion. We put no constraint upon this passage, then, when we derive from it, as the subject of discourse on the present occasion, PERSONAL PIETY AS RELATED TO THE MISSIONARY WORK.

We speak of that work in the widest sense, including whatever pertains to it both at home and abroad. And our aim is to show, that as personal piety is its source, so this, under God, is its chief reliance. This is the vital force of the whole movement, the grand motive power of all the machinery. Abstract or weaken

it, and sluggishness, inefficiency, and failure ensue ; give it depth and strength, and a world-wide evangelism is the natural and even necessary result.

I. For the elucidation of this subject, it may be well to begin, according to a good old method, with a negative view. Certain things there are, unduly trusted in by some, but which are in themselves as a broken reed. Subsidiary in some slight measure they may prove, if the heart be right — nay, important helps ; yet without true and deep piety, they are but as a cheat and a mockery. As the trellis-work of the arbor they may be, but not as the living vine, or as the principle of life and growth. Not one of them is to be utterly repudiated ; for the whole creation shall be made subservient to God's plan of saving grace. Yet we may not substitute them for the great spiritual motors.

1. I advert first, under this head, to *natural sympathy*. To this many of the aspects and issues of sin in unevangelized regions make a powerful appeal. I need not stop to show how illusory are certain poetical rhapsodies touching the state of nature. Here and there a dreamer may be found, enamored of the blissful ignorance, the charming simplicity, the exemption from corroding care and burdensome conventionalities, the large liberty, the luxurious leisure, the habit of romantic adventure, which, as shaped and colored by his infatuated fancy, pertain to the island or the forest home of the godless savage. Yet Christendom in general is well informed on this subject. To know what

ancient heathenism was, to see clearly its many and varied abominations and miseries, we have only to turn over the pages of Leland or of Tholuck. To see what man still is, without the light of the Gospel—how low he sinks, how the springs even of earthly enjoyment are either dried up or poisoned—we need only look at the beautiful isles of the Pacific as Christianity found them, at the barbarous tribes of Western or of Southern Africa, or at the besotted multitudes of China or of Hindostan. We touch not now on the future consequences of sin, or on the more spiritual evils it here engenders. We advert only to its more palpable inflictions, to the wants and woes quite visible even to the eye of the natural man.

From the broad empire of idolatry, as in one vast moving panorama, what shapes of evil does imagination summon! Behold these motley myriads, squalid and loathsome, the “human face divine” made brutal and fiendlike. Look into that dwelling, the miserable substitute for what we love to call home, and mark not merely the meagreness of its appointments, but the utter absence of all the sweet and gentle fireside charities. Over its forbidding portal you see written, “Without natural affection.” Behold the mother, as she issues forth, her heart petrified by superstition, to cast the babe from her bosom to the monsters of the flood. By his own children the aged and enfeebled father is led away to die alone and unheeded. The husband expires, the funeral pile is erected, and the frantic widow casts herself upon it. A group of hea-

then devotees are before us, with stiffened limbs and lacerated bodies. A pagan altar presents itself, all stained with human gore ; and over willing victims roll the ponderous wheels of the idol's car. The bloody Dyak is here, with his vaunted store of human heads ; and savage tribes rush to the battle-field, eager not for vengeance alone, but for the profits of the slave-mart.

We object not to showing, by these and other like illustrations, that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." It is only thus that the true nature of sin can be set forth. That appeals of this sort, as they have moved the sensibilities of men, have had some influence in urging on the missionary work, we do not doubt. Especially have they been serviceable, when other aspects of heathenism, and considerations of a loftier and more spiritual kind have been the primary incentives. What we insist on is, that we must beware of confiding unduly in such appeals. For this, as for every other form of philanthropy, a slender basis is a mere humanitarianism. Little will be accomplished, if the main fountain of missionary feeling, a true and deep Christian experience, be lacking. The point of sacrifice and self-denial will hardly be reached. It will be but the surface of our being that is stirred ; the depths below will be all unmoved. And even the superficial agitation must in the nature of things soon cease. Familiarity with exciting and horrifying scenes, where there is no deeply seated and powerfully operative

religious principle, must soon beget comparative indifference.

2. Nor may we lean with greater assurance on what may be called *the aesthetic principle*. God has so made us, that we have a susceptibility to the beautiful and the sublime wherever seen. We are touched by these qualities in external nature, but still more in the province of the intellectual and the moral. As seen in the palpable world, indeed, they are but the types of a higher excellence in the immaterial. A thousand various forms do they assume in the sphere of sentiment and of passion, of natural affection and of moral feeling, of merely secular action and of religious achievement; but nowhere are they more touchingly bodied forth than in the eventful annals of the missionary enterprise. Nay, it were no exaggeration to say, that here may be found their most perfect development. Just here would I look for specimens of whatever is most graceful in emotion, most startling and even romantic in adventure, most lofty and imposing in aim and action. To the broad missionary field would I resort for themes that most effectually stir the poet's soul, or for attitudes and scenes most worthy of the painter's pencil. I would point to Henry Martyn, casting the last look on the white cliffs of England, or sitting alone, as death drew near, in the orchard at Tocat, and thinking of his God, "in solitude his company, his friend, and his comforter." Harriet Newell would rise to my view, receiving the parting kiss of her widowed mother, and bidding fare-

well to the home of her childhood. I should gaze again on that secluded spot in the quiet valley of Williamstown, where a few pious young men, amid their deep self-scrutiny, and falling tears, and solemn vows, laid the corner-stone of our great missionary enterprise. To that first ordination of American missionaries in the old Tabernacle Church would I turn, to the kneeling forms of the pioneer band, and to the venerable men—the sainted Worcester and his compeers—gathered around them for “the laying on of hands.” Again would the brig Caravan, with her precious freight, float slowly forth from Salem harbor, while on the strange spectacle many gaze with moistened eyes and heaving bosoms. By that missionary grave would I stand on the Isle of France, or by that other grave beneath the Hopia tree, and think of the sleepers below, as once they walked together on the banks of the Merrimack, and talked of the Saviour whom they loved and would serve unto death. To the death-prison at Ava would I turn, to the blood-stained footsteps of the devoted Judson, and to the loathsome cell at Oung-pen-lay,—to mark not merely the patience in suffering and the holy steadfastness of the man of God, but to note also, and with still higher admiration, the martyr-like heroism of his noble wife. A loftier name than hers, where shall we find in all the glorious “Records of Woman ?”

If from the history of missions, crowded with instances like these, we turn to what may be called its literature—to that portion of it especially which is

germain to the point in hand—how thickly set do we find it with gems of purest lustre. Among all the lyrics of earth, how few will bear comparison, in respect as well of beauty as of true sublimity, with the oft repeated hymn of Heber! For delicacy of sentiment, and for depth of pathos, what production of the sort in the whole range of our literature, can claim precedence of that letter which announced to the mother of Harriet Newell the death of her daughter? I do not marvel that a beloved laborer in the foreign field, now with us for a season, refers to the perusal of it as the proximate cause—operating, indeed, on a heart already imbued with love to Christ—of his devoting himself to the missionary work. Were I asked to indicate, among all the treasures of English poesy, that one piece, which in the mingling of the sweetest and most touching of the natural affections with the loftiest exercises of the religious sentiment, stands without a rival, I know not what I would sooner name than those well-known lines of Mrs. Judson to her husband.

To particular death-scenes we have already alluded: how replete with æsthetic power is the whole missionary martyrology! In strains at once of classic beauty, and of womanly tenderness, has Mrs. Hemans sung of the perished warriors of her native land:—

“ Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where sleeps not England’s dead.”

In like strains, though with more thrilling import, we

might celebrate the dead of the sacramental host. Their requiem comes to us on every breeze. There is hardly a land under heaven but is hallowed by their dust; there is scarce an ocean in whose depths their bones are not reposing. In the green isles of the Pacific they sleep, and amid the spicy groves of Ceylon and Sumatra. In "the land of Sinim" they lie—beneath the waves that wash its coast—and amid the palm-trees and pagodas of India. On the shores of "the great and wide sea," and in the Holy City, are their sepulchres; in ancient Pontus, and beneath the shadow of old Argœus. In the beautiful plain of Oroomiah they slumber, and among the mosques and minarets of the Ottoman metropolis. On the western coast of benighted Africa they rest, and amid the forests and kraals of its southern borders. By the Father of Waters, on our own continent, and "where rolls the Oregon," are their graves; and in more dreary regions, amid "Greenland's icy mountains." Yet there have not been lacking those who were ready to be "baptized for the dead;" and onward still the missionary host have pressed, stayed by no obstacle, daunted by no danger. Nor shall they pause in their glorious career, till

"One song employs all nations."

These and other like aspects of beauty and of moral dignity, we would by no means overlook. In our missionary fabric we rejoice to recognize not only

the broad and deep foundations, but the garniture of all manner of precious stones—not the massive and imposing shaft alone, but the curiously chiselled and graceful capital. We would omit, in dealing with man's complex nature, not a single legitimate element of persuasion. Yet in urging to spiritual achievements we must beware of unduly exalting merely natural incentives. A broad distinction is there between the thrills and flights of sentiment, and the martyr-spirit. Not the first was Chalmers to discover "the slender influence of taste and sensibility in matters of religion." Ever since the missionary enterprise began, and especially since it has gained a certain popularity, it has been no strange thing for men to melt into tenderness, or to soar into the loftier moods of thought, as its history and claims have been unfolded, and yet to turn at last from the appeal apparently so effective, to tread as callously as ever the old path of niggardliness and self-indulgence.

3. It may seem strange if we add here—and yet there is reason for adding—that we can base no effectual appeal on the ground of *our own advantage*. The principle of self-love, as held in the grasp of a strict and sharp definition, as properly limited and subordinated, we would not wholly discard. Never perhaps has it safer and wider scope, than as recognizing the reflex influence of the missionary movement. No little benefit of a temporal sort has that movement conferred. How greatly indebted to the research it has required, are science and literature. What discov-

eries have been made in the department of language. Nay, of what creations can we speak. From many a chaos of rude and unsystematized speech, have order, and symmetry, and beauty been evoked. How have the subtle affinities of language been detected. And what light has been shed thus and otherwise, on the broad field—now assuming such interest in the view of the learned—of ethnological inquiry. How many points of geography, of statistical science, and of general history, have been elucidated. On many a topic of this sort, our missionary publications are already regarded as among the most valuable authorities. Some of our missionaries, indeed, may in some important departments of learning, be justly ranked with the best scholars of the age. Not that they have aimed at such distinction;—they have sought first “the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof,” and all these things have been added unto them. By missionary successes commerce has been benefited, and as inseparable from it, the arts and agriculture. When as the result of Christianization, a nation of nude savages, sleeping in miserable huts, are to be civilized from head to foot and in all the appliances and walks of life, no small demand is made on the industrial world. That world is benefited, too, as in many ways intercommunication is promoted. Apart from spiritual religion, moreover, there is, as every thoughtful man must admit, a restraint upon the working of a sordid utilitarianism, an enlarging influence upon the common mind, in holding up before it continually a noble

world-wide charity. Many a man who is full of prejudice against the cause we plead, is after all somewhat less of an earth-worm, for the indirect bearing upon his character of that very cause. Taking into view only temporal advantage, it cannot be doubted, that our own land is under great obligation to the missionary enterprise. Were there no eternity, we should as a nation and as individuals sustain great loss were that enterprise blotted out.

We need not hesitate to declare, then, that in this relation as well as others, godliness hath the "promise of the life that now is." We may countervail objections thus, and honor at once God's word and providence. Yet we greatly err, if we regard motives of this sort as of chief importance. The true missionary spirit hath far deeper foundations. It abases self—it goes out of self. Even that most elevated sort of reflex influence, the tendency of missionary effort to advance our own piety—a tendency not to be overlooked by those who hunger and thirst after righteousness—may yet be so regarded as to minister in our hearts to a specious sort of refined selfishness.

4. As truly ineffectual, we remark further, will be found the mere promptings of *conscience*. We speak of this faculty not in the broadest view, as embracing the whole religious nature, but in a narrower aspect, as distinguished from the heart. Appeals to it must be made, and effective they will be, if there lie back of it deep spiritual experiences and sympathies—if the whole renovated soul has joyfully accepted its teaching

and its sway. But quite impotent is it, if the tone of the affections be earthly. Distinctively apprehended, it is not the religious sense—it has no lively susceptibility to the lofty peculiarities of Christianity. To some forms of duty it may address itself, but not to the highest. Or if it essay these at all, it is as with palsied or manacled hand. It may preach, but it is coldly; it may give, but it is sparingly. Amid the shadows of selfishness, it is easily imposed on by the flimsiest subterfuges. It is apt to determine duty by some false measure, instead of weighing it in the balance of the sanctuary. Do what it may, it is slavish, heartless doing, as joyless as it is unavailing. Do what it may, it has no voice of prayer to call to its aid the arm of Omnipotence. Who has not noted the fruitlessness of all appeals to the conscience of the church, whether in regard to sinners here, or to the lost in heathendom, while upon the heart there has rested the paralysis of worldliness. Heart-wise, if at all, the car of salvation is to be moved onward.

5. Nor, finally, is the world to be converted by the mere principle of *association*. Quite accordant is it with the genius of Christianity, that for all good purposes men should be brought to act in concert. And great power, with the needful prerequisites, has this mode of action. There is no little force in the law of sympathy, as thus called into exercise. Broad and deep is the tide of feeling formed by the confluence of many rills. In associated effort, there is economy of strength, and concentration of strength. The indi-

vidual atom has in it but the attraction of cohesion, binding to itself some other atom ; the vast aggregate of particles holds to itself some other world. It is one of the happiest auspices of the present age, that combined action is so largely employed for the advancement of Christianity. Beautiful crystallizations of charity have risen before us, all lustrous with the rays of the sun of righteousness. Curious pieces of moral machinery have been constructed, the like of which for perfectness of design and execution, the world has never before seen. Yet in this very perfectness, let it be remembered, there lurks a danger. Very liable are we to forget, that this machinery is not self-acting—that “the spirit of the living creature” must be in the wheels. In our various forms of association we are apt to merge disastrously our proper individuality. We lose sight, too often, of our personal responsibility. By no agglomeration of dead particles, can you produce a living organism. By no enlargement or improvement of machinery, can you accomplish any thing if the motive power be lacking. Multiply as you please forms of benevolent co-operation, you make real progress in the world’s conversion only as in each Christian heart is found the ever effective principle of vital godliness.

II. Having glanced thus at the negative aspect of our subject, let us turn now to the positive. Nothing short of deep personal piety we have seen will avail ; we proceed to show how necessarily efficacious that must be—how out of its deep fountains in the heart,

as naturally as water gushes from the mountain spring, flows out to a lost world the tide of benevolence. Many, indeed, are the connections and correspondences of the world without with the world within. Man has been well called a microcosm. As an old poet quaintly expresses it,

“Thy mind
Europe supplies, and Asia thy will,
And Afric thine affections ; and if still
Thou list to travel further, put thy senses
For both the Indies.”

Little will he do for the outer world's subjugation to God, who has not first subjugated the inner world. That achieved, he is not only irresistibly prompted to all evangelism, but he has the indispensable and most fundamental preparation for it. In illustration of this view, let us advert now to the chief elements of all true piety.

1. First among these I mention the *spirit of contrition*. Very prominent is this grace, not only in the Psalm from which our text is taken, but in all Christian experience. The renewed man, enlightened to behold the beauty of the divine law, perceives in affecting contrast, the hatefulness of sin. He had heard of it before “by the hearing of the ear,” but now his eye seeth it, and he abhors himself. Never, indeed, is sin seen as it is, till we see it in ourselves. In the heart are its chief evils, and we cannot inspect the hearts of our fellow men. It is only as we go down into the

“chambers of imagery” in our own bosoms, and mark the defilements and abominations there, that we have any adequate apprehension of what sin hath done in others. Loathing it as revealed in our own consciousness,—sigling for deliverance from it, we are prepared and constrained to pray for other sinners. He only who has lain himself, day after day, on a bed of racking pain, weary of tossings to and fro, has learned duly to sympathize with a like sufferer. None can enter into the case of the imperilled mariner like the man, who has himself felt, on the vessel’s deck, amid rocks and quicksands, the pelting of the sleet-laden blast. So in the matter of the soul’s maladies and perils, there is nothing like experience to beget compassion. How natural is that outburst of holy feeling, which follows Cowper’s allegorical description of his own conversion:—

“I see that all are wanderers, gone astray,
Each in his own delusion.”

What affecting views of the condition of the unrenewed are commonly taken, by those who have just emerged themselves from the pollutions and glooms of unregeneracy. The history of all revivals shows, that whenever the people of God are brought to see with increased clearness, and to mourn with unwonted grief, their own remaining corruption, then, as by an inevitable sequence, “rivers of waters run down their eyes” because the wicked around them keep not God’s law.

Nor does the feeling thus awakened, confine itself to Christian lands. As sin in their own case is the chief of all calamities and burdens—hateful not only in view of its consequences, but in its own nature—so is it, in their apprehension, with all the tribes and nations of the unevangelized. As they long for the deliverance of their own souls from “the body of this death,” so do they long and pray for the deliverance of the whole world. The primary element of a true missionary spirit, we hold, is brokenness of heart.

2. Next in order comes *a Christ-exalting spirit*. The renewed heart magnifies Christ as its own glorious portion. All else is felt to be but “vanity and vexation of spirit.” “It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” In him is all help; he is a fitting and satisfying object of the soul’s affections. “He that cometh to me,” he says, “shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst.” Quaffing full draughts from the gushing fountain, the believer would beckon to it the weary and fainting travellers on all the desert. His language is,

“Oh! for a trumpet voice,
On all the world to call,
To bid their hearts rejoice
In him who died for all.”

The Saviour, he feels too, is, in his own excellency, and in the glory of his work, worthy to be exalted. His name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,

the Everlasting Father." By him were earth's foundation's laid. It was over his work "the morning stars sang together." In his incarnation "the whole Deity is known." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," says Paul, "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In view of the depth of his voluntary humiliation, the ineffable beauty of his earthly example, the matchless love that bore him through the garden to the cross, the might and the majesty with which he vanquished death, and ascended on high "leading captivity captive," the wisdom and benignity with which he wields now the sceptre of universal dominion, how is all finite excellency disparaged and forgotten; how worthy does he seem of "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." In his own body, would the true disciple magnify him, "whether it be by life or by death," and earnestly does he desire his promised exaltation in the hearts of all men. He would publish his glory. He would speed the flight of the angel who proclaims it. Day by day, from his full heart he cries,

"Come, then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy."

2. With all this, I remark further, is intimately connected, in a true Christian experience, the spirit of

self-consecration. This obviously pervades both the text and the context; and much more may we look for it in relation to the fully manifested Messiah. It is an unspeakable privilege, the believer feels, to live for one so glorious. Nay, to live unto him, is, in its principles, its aims, its sympathies, and its achievements, the only true life. All else is but a living death. Thus, moreover, is he bound to live, and that by the strongest as well as the most precious bonds. He is not his own. He is "bought with a price"—"not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." To the advancement of the Saviour's cause, he deeply and joyfully feels, his powers should be all devoted. He imitates the example of those Corinthian believers, of whom Paul testifies, "They first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." He makes no reserve. Why should he? Can he withhold aught from him who "spared not his own Son," or from him who refused not to give himself for us? As in his person he is the Lord's, so is he in his possessions. A searching inquiry was that of a beloved missionary lately, "Did you see to it, when you yourselves were translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, that your property was translated also?" Nor is the truly consecrated soul disposed to limit the field of effort. That field, he rejoices to know, is the world. Wherever sin, Christ's foe, may be extirpated, wherever Christ's glory may be made known, thither is he ready, if Christ call

him, to go, or if that may not be, to aid by his substance in sending other laborers.

4. As a crowning element, at once of true piety and of the missionary spirit, I subjoin *confidence in God*. For the self-denial and hardness inseparable from the Christian warfare, there is important preparation in the principles already named. Little will he think of privations and sacrifices, who has a due sense of the evil to be overcome, and whose heart is all aglow with love for Christ, and with zeal for his glory. Yet in all his course what formidable obstacles does he meet, and what desponding if not despairing thoughts do they often suggest. In his private conflicts, he has sympathy often with him who said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul." As he sets himself to the work of the world's conversion, what gigantic forms of depravity rise up before him — what towering and overshadowing fabrics of error, what mounds, and ramparts, and battlements of superstition. It is only by that superadded yet homogeneous grace to which we now point, that through all, and over all, he will be borne onward.

In regard to the world's renovation, I know, much account has been made — far too much doubtless — of merely natural forces. Men have descanted on human progress as if there were some other progress in God's kingdom than that of regenerating grace. They have talked of the law of development, as if it were possible out of pure darkness to evolve light. They have enlarged on the diffusion of knowledge, and the improve-

ment of social and political institutions, as if the rays of the sun could change the nature of the granite they fall on, or as if the hue and fashion of the habiliments worn, or of the dwelling occupied, could steal from the frame a mortal malady. As they have diligently shaken the kaleidoscope of their fancy, they have been confidently looking to see the bits of glass in it endued with life, or assuming some other than a most illusory beauty. Even good Christian men, in giving a reason of the hope that is in them for our fallen humanity, have made quite too prominent certain superficial changes. Give men knowledge like that of fiends, and they may still be as malignant. Bring the whole race into the most intimate intercommunion, and it may be, in the enkindling of evil passions, but as the more vehement glow of gathered coals of fire. Helps to the progress of religion may indeed be found — as well as results of that progress — in the changed and changing state of the world. Channels may be opened; highways may be cast up; vehicles may be furnished. But as to the regenerating work, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts." The only good hope in this regard, is that which finds no resting place short of the throne of Jehovah.

Now to just this buoyant animating hope is the true Christian led by his own private experience. Whatever obstacles present themselves in the sin-stricken world without, difficulties quite as formidable has he met in the world within. What divine grace and might have done in the one, warrants the

largest expectation in regard to the other. If God has changed to flesh my own stony heart, for what heart may I not have hope? If he has cast down the altars reared in my own bosom to a thousand idols, what to his arm is the multitude of pagan fanes? If the darkness of my own soul has been dispelled—the more fearful for its contrast with the light around me—is there not hope even for the midnight of heathenism? Nor is the believer encouraged merely by what God has done. In the same simple faith, with which for himself he cleaves to the divine promise, he rests on that same promise as he labors for the world. The millennial day shall dawn—its noon tide shall come—because God hath said it. All other assurances are to him comparatively as the idle wind. It is this which gives wings to prayer. It is this which encourages him to contribute of his treasures, or to go himself to the broad harvest-field. It is this which animates the missionary's heart, as amid the dark places of the earth he struggles with brutal degradation, with hoary prejudice, with cruel and relentless superstition. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" he exclaims, "before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

We might advert, in the same connection, to other points of Christian experience. But those we have mentioned are not only fundamental and distinctive; in their necessary adjuncts and issues, they embrace whatever is pure and elevated in "the hidden man of the heart." Enough has been said to show, that while

all other reliances must prove abortive, deep personal piety is the unfailing spring of all wise and holy evangelism—that heartfelt piety, indeed, and the true missionary spirit, are one and indivisible. We shall be further borne with, as we subjoin briefly certain practical suggestions.

1. It first of all occurs to us, that we have, in our subject, a searching *test of Christian character*. We may ask, on the one hand, whether with some show of the missionary spirit, we have its invariable counterpart, the diligent keeping of our own hearts? It is quite possible to ride in the chariot of Jehu, yet know little or nothing of the tearful vigils of David. True religion is ever symmetrical. But what, on the other hand, must we think of those—or, as it may be better shaped, what should they think of themselves—who, while they profess to be spiritually minded, take little interest in missionary matters? We cast no reflection on the men of another and a different age. The times of that ignorance “God winked at.” There were extrinsic causes at work then, to hinder somewhat the normal development of piety. It is of the present day we are speaking, and of persons more or less enlightened as to the subject in hand. If at the monthly concert their places are either constantly or frequently vacant—if the slightest excuse is sufficient to keep them away; if their gifts to the Lord’s treasury are few and far between, or, though frequently and regularly made, are yet doled out as from the miser’s reluctant grasp; if every point of personal

and domestic convenience and gratification is first amply provided for, and only the mere leavings of luxury, the offerings which in a sense cost them nothing, are laid on God's altar; if they are only aroused to some spasm of zeal, as something new and startling presents itself, as they listen to some strain of sentiment or of romance, as some tale of horror is uttered, or as the galvanic force of a unique and impassioned eloquence is brought to bear on them; how large must be that charity which can refrain from standing in doubt of them? Can they loathe sin in themselves, and yet not loathe it in the world? Can they truly exalt Christ in their own hearts, and yet not fervently desire that all others should exalt him? Can they consecrate themselves and all they have to him, and yet withhold from that cause with which his glory is so intimately connected, either their prayers or their alms, either themselves or their children? Can they confide in Christ for the salvation of their own souls, and yet be paralyzed by doubt and distrust in regard to the world's salvation? Ponder well these queries, ye who stand coldly aloof from the missionary enterprise, or who serve it with but a faint and intermittent zeal.

2. We see, I remark secondly, *why the missionary work has made no greater progress.* We overlook not what has been accomplished. We rejoice in it, and give thanks to God. Yet how much land remaineth to be possessed; how much, after all, has been left undone—how little, compared with the exigencies of

the case, are we now doing ! The fault is not, we may be sure, in the heart of him who gave his Son to lay the foundations of our enterprise, or of him who cemented those foundations with his own blood. Nor lies the difficulty in the lack of pecuniary means. There is money enough in the keeping even of the Churches represented in this Association, held by them as the sworn stewards of God—money which might be better spared than retained, the sparing of which would be a gain both for time and eternity—to put the Parent Society beyond the possibility of financial perplexity. It were easy for the churches of our land at once to double its income. Nor need there be a want of laborers. Men enough there are—a superabundance of them—for all the paths and enterprises of worldly ambition. Nor do we lack evidence, as we have seen, of the palpable woes inflicted by heathenism. Nor are appeals wanting to the imaginative faculty, to taste and sensibility, and to our quick perception of reflex advantage. Nor fail the Providence of God, and the Christian press, and the Gospel ministry, to clamor incessantly in the ear of Conscience. Nor has the defect been in the matter of machinery. Machinery enough is already in play to irrigate effectively every desert under heaven. It is the motive power that has been wanting—deep, all-pervading, personal piety,—the power that not only stirs man to effort, but, through the channel of prayer, moves the arm of God. Not with associations, as such, has been the chief fault, or with aught out-

ward and objective, but with individual hearts. Each one of us, my brethren, in his place and his measure, may take home the guilt and the shame to his own bosom.

3. We learn, then, I remark once more, *at what, as friends of the missionary cause, we should prominently aim.* It is the increase of personal godliness. This, as we have seen, is the only hope of our great enterprise; and on this the whole history of the past seems now to cast us. Other motives there are—lawful if subordinate—which appear in a measure to have spent their force. To the miseries and the horrors of paganism—to infanticide and cannibalism, to self-torture and self-immolation, to the offering up of human victims, to all cruel and abominable usages and rites—our thoughts have become accustomed. Little of novelty, indeed, has the cause of missions now to offer. All New-England was moved once—not to say our whole country—at the ordination of five young men to the work of the ministry in heathen lands. Now, a like ordination, with all the consequent scenes of parting and embarkation, is as an every-day occurrence. Once a returned missionary was to the churches almost as an Apostle come back from glory. Now the faces of scores of them are well known to us, and their most startling tales of peril and of suffering have become familiar to our ears as household words. As, when the beautiful vale, or the cloud-capped mountain, is made our abiding place, we soon grow heedless com-

paratively of what once delighted or awed us ; so is it, to some extent, with the whole æsthetic element of the missionary enterprise. We have become ingenious, too, it is to be feared, in quieting our consciences. And even on those benevolent organizations which seemed once as the sun for brightness, by keen-sighted gazers spots have been discovered ! How obvious, then, that for the carrying onward of our great work, a new impulse must be given to the piety of the Church. A returning to God there must be on the part of the backsliding, and a brokenness of heart such as David exemplified. There must be in us all a deeper Christian experience. A more self-abasing, Christ-exalting spirit must we exercise ; more honest and hearty must be our self-consecration, more simple and childlike our confidence in God. To this end, with what earnestness should we seek the outpouring of the Divine Spirit. Who can estimate the blessing that would come to the heathen world from a general revival of religion in our land ?

And what we do, I add in closing, it becomes us to do quickly. What urgency is upon us, from the clustering prayers of departed generations, and from the converging lines of a glorious Providence ! What preparation for the present, and for the triumphs of the Gospel, do we see in all the past ! What a training has the Church had ; what admonitory lessons has she been taught ! What furniture of knowledge has she gained ! And what a highway for salvation has

God been casting up ! Inventions and discoveries, which at an earlier day would have been of little avail comparatively — as the mariner's compass, the art of printing, the steam power, the modern applications of the magnetic force, and, chief in its class, the discovery of our own continent — have found their respective places in the divinely appointed concatenation of instrumentalities, just as they might best tell on the work of redemption. In our own times, what a confluence of helps is there to the spread of the Gospel. How, as intercommunication has been facilitated, have new fields been opened, and old ones become better known. As the world has been flowing together, how have barriers of prejudice and custom, of national and international restraint and prohibition, been melting away. How is commerce proffering "its wheel and its wing," to bear to the Gentiles God's word and God's messengers. How has the lightning of heaven come down to earth, that it may flash the Gospel around the globe. The changes among the nations, how coincident are they, in their general scope, whatever temporary reverses may here and there occur, with the great aim of the missionary enterprise. I speak not of these things as themselves to be rested in; how plainly do they reveal to us the Saviour's hand. On island and continent, among the down-trodden masses and on the high places of power, I hear the sound of his footsteps. As he cometh thus, to "set judgment in the earth" — as the valleys are exalted and the mountains are made

low, as the crooked is made straight, and the rough places are made plain—how should his people gird themselves for the work he assigns them! Seeing ye behold such things, brethren, and look for such things, “what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!”

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

WE are convened to night to celebrate with sacred services the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Foreign Missionary Society of New-York and Brooklyn. In presenting their report, the Board of Managers, while they gratefully recognize the goodness of God in preserving the lives of so many of their number during the past year, are called upon to record the death of one of their most honored and valued members—the Rev. Erskine Mason, D. D. After a long illness, which he bore with exemplary Christian resignation and fortitude, he departed from us on the 14th of May, 1851. His services in the cause of missions were among his *distinguishing* labors. And this Society has reason to bless God for the monument of his missionary zeal and fidelity which he reared, when about a year before his decease, he preached the first of these annual discourses, and presented to us, and to the churches associated with us, one of the most enlarged and thorough surveys of the condition of the world in its relations to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, though dead, still speaks to us these words of encouragement. And in his luminous and eloquent reasonings, imparts power and meaning to the prophetic declarations of the Gospel's ultimate triumph.

During the past year the Society has continued its efforts to sustain and advance the missionary spirit in the churches. The meeting held at the Tract House on the Monday of the monthly concert, has, we think, never been better attended or more useful.

During the last fall, a committee was appointed to address a circular letter to each church, on the importance of adopting a *systematic plan* by which to develope more generally the missionary spirit, and enlist the

prayers and contributions of as many members as possible in behalf of the cause. This letter was prepared, and sent to every church and pastor, with the request that it be read from the pulpit on the Sabbath. It was also published, at the instance of the Society, in several of the religious papers of the City.

The Board of Managers have also been assiduous in their endeavors to secure the establishment, in this metropolis, of a Secretary of the A. B. C F. M., who shall be co-ordinate with the Secretaries at Boston. The Parent Society, at its late meeting in Portland, referred the subject to a special committee, which met in this city a few months since. The committee of this Society conferred freely with them, and the hope is confidently cherished that the object, so long and so earnestly sought by them, will ere long be attained.

The receipts from our churches are in advance of those of last year nearly two thousand dollars. In this we rejoice; though when we consider the magnitude and the excellency of the cause of missions, and the number and strength of our churches, we should rather mourn and be ashamed of the result.

The difficulty of awakening and sustaining an interest in a given cause, is very much in proportion to its *spirituality*. The more material and tangible its results—the more conjoined with temporal and national or local interests its appeals, the more immediately successful will an enterprise ordinarily be: while that object, whose promotion is dependent almost entirely upon personal holiness and a *simple faith* in God's Word, will meet with a multitude of appalling difficulties, and be exposed to many reverses and disasters in an unsanctified and unbelieving church. The conquest and subjugation of the millennial Canaan by the church, is not unlike that of the Jewish Canaan by the Israelites. The river Jordan—the sons of Anak—the walled towns—still exist, and are prevalent against the command and promise of the Almighty Himself. Labor, which is mostly in anticipation of results in the distant future, *preliminary* toils and sacrifices, which are attended with very little present and tangible reward, require a simple heroic faith—a self-sacrificing martyr spirit, rare in this age. Hence it is that the grandeur of the missionary enterprise is so feebly appreciated, its appeals are so unimpressive, its enlargement so difficult, its concerts for prayer so thinly attended.

While no cause in the present keeping of the Christian church has so manifestly and abundantly the sanction of Heaven and the co-operation of

God, as has that of Foreign Missions, there is almost no proportionate estimate of its worth and grandeur. With a religion that commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves—to embrace a lost world in our sympathies, how little is done by the Church in this land to evangelize the heathen, compared with what she is doing for religion at home? And has not the reason for this already been intimated? viz., that the work is so eminently spiritual, the labor is to so great an extent preliminary and in anticipation of results. In our home efforts, faith is mixed with sight. Patriotism, temporal interests, denominational rivalries, and immediate results, combine with the purer motives of Christianity: and it is a question, whether we do not deceive ourselves, when we attribute to *piety*, results which the piety alone of the Church never would have accomplished.

During the year 1850, the churches contributed to the various religious benevolent societies, whose operations are almost exclusively in this country, 1,500,000 dollars, while 675,000 was the total of contributions for foreign missions. But this presents a very imperfect view of the case. During that year, Christians in this country paid, at the lowest estimate, 12,300,000 dollars for the support and propagation of the Gospel at home, in salaries, erecting churches, and aiding the societies above referred to, and only 675,000 to the evangelization of the world.*

The missionary enterprise is one almost exclusively of faith. The conversion of 8 or 900,000,000 of depraved, apostate souls, imbedded in ancient idolatries, in ignorance, in despotism, in the pagan customs of centuries, concerning whom it is written that God hath given them up to uncleanness and vile affections, and a reprobate mind—upon whom the influences of an unhallowed civilization are ten thousand fold more abundant and efficient than those of the Gospel of Christ,—the conversion of a world *dead* in sin, is, I say, a work to be prosecuted under the auspices of a living, childlike faith—a principle of action more powerful and more pure than would be the inspiration of the most extensive and brilliant success. When Christians shall look not at difficulties nor disasters, but only at the face of Christ, and shall encourage themselves not upon the favorable indications of a changing empire or state, but in the promises of an unchanging God, and in the glorious issues of futurity,—when Christians shall thus regard the cause of missions, its triumph will commence. For faith can do again what it has done in the past—subdue kingdoms—turn to flight the armies of the

* These statistics are taken from Dr. Baird's "Progress and Prospects of Christianity in the United States."

aliens—obtain promises—overcome the world. The Church will continue her operations amid the shaking and overturning of the nations. And her labors which cannot be shaken—which are never in vain, shall remain the foundation of the world's thorough and lasting regeneration, whereon shall be planted the pillars of the new Heavens, under which shall dwell righteousness.

THOMAS H. SKINNER, JR.,

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN,
in account current with their Treasurer, J. W. TRACY.

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>C.R.</i>
<i>By Cash, from the following sources:</i>			
April 13,	Allen Street Presbyterian Church, New York,	\$129 00	
1851,	Bleecker Street do do "	875 06	
to	Brainerd do do "	101 30	
March 31,	Brick do do "	933 14	
1852.	Broadway Tabernacle do do "	258 01	
	Central Presbyterian do do "	687 40	
	Church of the Puritans do do "	1,252 27	
	Eastern Congregational do do "	19 09	
	Eighth Avenue do do "	25 00	
	Eleventh Presbyterian do do "	88 85	
	Fourteenth Street do do "	469 73	
	Harlem do do "	76 60	
	Houston Street do do "	25 50	
	Madison Avenue do do "	100 00	
	Mercer Street do do "	5,139 11	
	Pearl Street do do "	174 74	
	Presbyterian Ch. on University Place do do "	250 00	
	Seventh Presbyterian Church do do "	203 77	
	Spring Street do do "	81 76	
	Tenth do do "	293 65	
	Thirteenth Street do do "	38 06	
	West do do "	406 60	
	Sundry donations in New York and Brooklyn, do do "	1,012 74	
			12,641 38
	Bedford Congregational Church, Brooklyn, do do "	11 39	
	Central Presbyterian do do "	17 12	
	Church of the Pilgrims, do do "	2,065 23	
	Clinton Avenue Cong. do do "	40 00	
	First Presbyterian do do "	830 58	
	Fulton Avenue Cong. do do "	45 00	
	Plymouth do do "	452 46	
	Second do do "	123 68	
	Second Presbyterian do do "	456 28	
	South do do "	1,219 32	
	Third do do "	138 63	
			5,399 69
	First Presbyterian Church, Williamsburgh, do do "	68 75	
			\$18,109 82

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Dr.</i>
April 13.	To Cash paid rent of room for monthly meetings,	-	\$8 00
1851,	" Expenses of Committees,	-	18 00
to	" for 3000 copies Mr. Storrs' Sermon,	-	127 00
March 31.	" A. Merwin agent A. B. C. F. M. at	-	
1852.	sundry times as per receipts.	-	17,956 82
			\$18,109 82

E. & O. E.

NEW YORK, March 31. 1852.

J. W. TRACY, *Treasurer.*

Examined and Found Correct.

DAVID HOADLEY,
WALTER S. GRIFFITH, } *Auditors.*

LIST OF OFFICERS

FOR THE YEAR 1852.

PRESIDENT.

JASPER CORNING.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

ANSON G. PHELPS, JOHN A. DAVENPORT,
WILLIAM C. GILMAN, DAVID HOADLEY.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, JR.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

ALMON MERWIN.

TREASURER.

J. W. TRACY.

DIRECTORS.

Allen Street Presbyterian Church, . . . M. T. HEWIT, EDWARD CHAPIN.

Bleecker Street " " . . . CHARLES N. TALBOT, CHARLES GOULD.

Fourteenth Street " " . . . WM. A. BOOTH, W. E. DODGE.

Brick " " . . . A. L. ELY, C. H. MERRY.

Broadway Tabernacle " " . . . W. G. WEST, DAVID HALE.

Central Presbyterian " " . . . FREDERICK BULL, A. O. VAN LENNEP.

Church of the Puritans, " " . . . O. E. WOOD, HOMER MORGAN.

Duane St. Presbyterian Church . . . C. E. PIERSON, WM. WALKER.

Eastern Congregational " " . . . STEPHEN CUTTER, LEWIS CHICHESTER.

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Eleventh " " . . . J. E. MARSHALL, E. B. LITTELL.

Harlem " " . . . E. KETCHUM, JAMES RIKER, JR.

<i>Houston Street Presb. Church,</i>	E. H. BURGER, S. DERRICKSON.
<i>Mercer Street</i>	"	.... J. B. SHEFFIELD, ANSON G. PHELPS, JR.
<i>Pearl Street</i>	"	.... HUGH AIKMAN, F. H. BARTHOLOMEW.
<i>Presb. Church, University Place,</i>	....	W. W. STONE, J. K. MYERS.
<i>North Presbyterian Church,</i>	....	O. H. LEE, JAMES REEVE.
<i>Seventh</i>	"	.... ALEXANDER MILNE, CHARLES MERRILL.
<i>Spring Street</i>	"	.... JOSEPH S. HOLT, CHARLES W. FISHER.
<i>Tenth</i>	"	.... J. F. JOY, L. E. JACKSON.
<i>Thirteenth Street</i>	"	.... J. N. DANFORTH, DAN KNIGHT.
<i>West</i>	"	.... A. D. F. RANDOLPH, ABRAM L. EARLE.
 <i>Bedford Cong. Church, Brooklyn,</i>	....	D. O. CAULKINS, EDWARD T. GOODALL.
<i>Bridge st.</i>	"	.... WM. VAIL, CLARK JACOBS.
<i>Central Presb.</i>	"	.... CHARLES C. MUDGE, D. J. LEDYARD.
<i>Clinton Ar. Cong.</i>	"	.... S. DAVENPORT, MARK H. NEWMAN.
<i>Church of the Pilgrims,</i>	"	.... CHS. J. STEDMAN, ALFRED S. BARNES.
<i>First Presbyterian Church,</i>	"	.... ALFRED EDWARDS, R. J. THORNE.
<i>Plymouth Cong.</i>	"	.... J. TASKER HOWARD, H. C. BOWEN.
<i>Second Presbyterian</i>	"	.... CHARLES CLARKE, LUCIUS HOPKINS.
<i>South</i>	"	.... WALTER S. GRIFFITH, D. W. INGERSOLL.
<i>South Cong.</i>	"	.... S. W. GRANT, SOLOMON FREEMAN.
<i>Third Presbyterian</i>	"	.... W. W. HURLBUT, JNO. C. HALSEY, M.D.
<i>Fulton Avenue Cong. Ch.</i>	"	.... F. W. BURKE, ALFRED SMITHERS.
 <i>First Presb. Ch., Williamsburgh,</i>	....	PAUL J. FISH.



